(a) the details of the recommendations of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on spectrum distribution specially 3G; and

(b) Government's response to each of TRAI's recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has issued its recommendations on issues regarding efficient utilization of spectrum, spectrum pricing and spectrum allocation procedure. TRAI has generally made following recommendations on 3G spectrum issues;

(i) 3G spectrum allocation to the existing operators should be viewed as extension of 2G spectrum allocations.

(ii) It is not desirable to allocate spectrum both in IMT-2000 2 GHz band and 1900 MHz USPCS band in a mixed manner due to non-availability of 1900 MHz USPCS band, Interference issues, spectrum reserved for micro cellular WLL systems based on TDD access techniques, etc.

(iii) IMT-2000 2 GHz band should be allocated to mobile operators for offering IMT-2000 (3G) services both in GSM and CDMA.

(iv) Each existing operator should be granted 2 x 5 MHz in IMT-2000 2 GHz band, who demands it.

(v) The allocation of IMT-2000 2 GHz spectrum as discussed above, will be subjected to rollout conditions.

(vi) In view of the possibility that initially only one or two carriers (each carrier of 2 x 5 MHz) in IMT-2000 2 GHz band are available, the allocation and pricing of spectrum has also been discussed in the recommendations.

(b) The spectrum issues are very complex, necessitating in-depth analysis. Government are examining the recommendations of the TRAI, taking into account views of all stakeholders, appropriately.

Losses suffered by postal department

1134. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Postal Department has suffered a huge loss of Rs. 1475 crores during the year 2004-05 which is 8 per cent more than in the previous year;

(b) the reasons for its poor performance during the last few years;

(c) what steps are proposed to be initiated to improve its performance and revenue generations;

(d) whether there is any plan to improve its efficiency and better utilization of the existing large work force; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Rs. 1475 crore was the projected deficit of the department in Revised Estimates 2004-05; the actual deficit for the year 2004-05 is yet to be finalized. However, as per provisional results available, the deficit should be lower than that projected.

(b) Department of Posts has not performed poorly during the last two years. There is a decline in deficit from 1999-2000 onwards except in the year 2003-04 when there was a marginal increase in the deficit. This marginal increase was due to payment of arrears of haulage charges to railways due to a revision of rates with retrospective effect. The Department is also providing a host of services as part of its Universal Service Obligations at a subsidy as per the policy of the Government.

(c) The Department has been continuously taking measures to improve its performance and revenue generation by introducing premium products like Speed Post, Express Parcel Post, Media Post, e-post etc. to cross subsidize its Universal Service Obligations. Computerization of Speed Post Centres, Free Pick up facility, Door to Door delivery, Internet Base Track & Trace, Credit facility, State Speed Post Centres, National Speed Post Centres etc. have been/are being provided to improve the quality of performance and revenue generation. A monthly review of expenditures as well as Revenue Receipts is being carried out at Secretary level.

(d) and (e) To improve efficiency of the system and its capacity to generate revenues, the Department has initiated a number of measures under Plan to modernize it and induct technology into the various operations. Approximately 79% of the overall Tenth Plan outlay of Rs. 1350 crores has been earmarked for this purpose. Computerisation of post offices is a major initiative, which will increase the efficiency and producti-vity of the Department. Further Computerisation of Speed Post Centres and Registration Sorting Centres is under way to improve the quality of performance and revenue generation. The postal network is being

rationalized to optimize the existing manpower and increase its productivity. New post offices have been opened only through redeployment of existing manpower. Officers and staff are given exposure to various training programmes for upgradation of their skills. Number of new products and Value Added Services have been introduced including e-Bill Post, Track & Trace facilities in Speed Post etc.

Rural savings through POSB scheme

1135. SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the number of POSBs (Post Office Saving Banks) now functioning in rural areas;

(b) whether the above number is higher than the number of POSBs in urban areas;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) the share of POSBs in overall rural savings;

(e) in what manner Government would encourage rural savings through these POSBs; and

(f) whether Government are planning to introduce any new scheme under RPLI?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) 1,38,622 Post Office Saving Banks (POSBs) are functioning in rural areas.

(b) and (c) 16,537 Post Office Saving Banks (POSBs) are functioning in urban areas.

(d) The share of POSB in rural savings averages to 55% approximately. This figure is an average of percentage figures as reflected by 13 out a total of 22 Postal Circles.

(e) Rural savings will be encouraged as given below:—

(i) Specific targets are being allotted to field units to mobilize deposits, which are being monitored.

(ii) Widespread publicity is being given to POSB schemes through small saving drives in Rural Areas/Media Post/Local Dailies